

## **Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction**

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## **25 schools set to receive free fresh fruits and vegetables**

*State is one of four chosen by USDA to offer free, healthy snacks*

**OLYMPIA – Oct. 26, 2004** – Got fresh fruit or veggies? Students in 25 schools across Washington are about to say “yes” because their buildings have been selected for the free fresh fruit and vegetable program sponsored by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

During the school day, all students will have access to healthy fresh fruits and vegetable snacks at no cost – whether through a basket in their classroom, a display in the main office or even through a vending machine.

Concerns about childhood obesity and the health and fitness level of children are key reasons State Superintendent of Public Instruction Terry Bergeson is pleased to welcome this program in Washington.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to bring free and healthy snacks into our schools in a way that all children can benefit,” said Bergeson. “Instead of paying 75 cents for a bag of chips, our kids can reach for a crisp Washington apple to satisfy their hunger and help feed their appetite for learning. At the same time, we are instilling healthy food choices as an easy and tasty option in our schools.”

As part of the Child Nutrition and WIC Act reauthorization this summer, Congress set aside additional funds to expand the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) free Fresh Fruit and Vegetables program. Only four states and one tribal organization had been part of the initial pilot program.

After careful consideration of the quality of state-sponsored child nutrition programs and where this new program would be well implemented, the USDA chose two tribal organizations and four states, including Washington.

A unique element of this program is the requirement that schools choose a non-governmental community partner to help ensure successful implementation and outcomes of increased healthy food consumption.

To help schools meet this requirement, OSPI is partnering with the Washington State Departments of Agriculture (WSDA) and Health (DOH) to identify potential community partners. The WSDA’s “Farm-to-Cafeteria” program and the “Access Healthy Food” project from DOH can help connect local farmers with the schools or help promote nutritious food choices in and out of the classroom.

### **Fruits & Vegetables/ add 1-1-1**

“WSDA is proud to help these schools source Washington grown foods,” said WSDA Director Valoria Loveland. “The WSDA Small Farm and Direct Marketing program informs schools, colleges and other institutions how to showcase Washington grown foods, and connects

them with local farms. Connecting these 25 schools with Washington grown products is just one more way that we can assist Washington farms."

The USDA has found students increasing their consumption of healthy snacks in the schools chosen in the initial pilot of this program, and hopes to see similar success in Washington and the other states and organizations selected.

To be considered for the program, an eligible district must have at least one elementary or middle school enrolling 50 percent or more of their students in the free-and reduced-price meal program. OSPI reviewed the district-submitted applications and recommended schools to the USDA for selection. The USDA quickly responded and approved the nominations.

Schools will be fully reimbursed for the cost of purchasing, preparing and distributing the fruits and vegetables. The program will run through this school year in the 25 selected schools. In spring 2005, OSPI will again invite all eligible districts to apply for the 2005-06 school year. Washington state will continue to receive funding for this program through June 2009.

### **List of Schools**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Island View Elementary, Anacortes       | Lake Hills Elementary, Bellevue         |
| Shuskan Middle School, Bellingham       | Bridgeport Elementary, Bridgeport       |
| Jefferson-Lincoln Elementary, Centralia | Deer Park Middle School, Deer Park      |
| Grant Elementary, Eastmont              | Madrona Elementary, Highline            |
| Hood Canal PreK-8, Hood Canal           | Neeley-O'Brien Elementary, Kent         |
| Kittitas Elementary, Kittitas           | Morgen Owings Elementary, Lake Chelan   |
| Shiloh Elementary, Mead                 | Kendall Elementary, Mount Baker         |
| Madison Elementary, Olympia             | North Omak Elementary , Omak            |
| Pateros K-12, Pateros                   | Paschal Sherman Indian School (private) |
| T.T. Minor Elementary, Seattle          | Harrison Middle School, Sunnyside       |
| Taholah K-12, Taholah                   | Tonasket Elementary, Tonasket           |
| Warden Middle School, Warden            | Washtucna K-12, Washtucna               |
| Wellpinit School, Wellpinit             |   |

### **About OSPI**

*The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is the primary agency charged with overseeing K-12 education in Washington state. Led by State School Superintendent Dr. Terry Bergeson, OSPI works with the state's 296 school districts and nine Educational Service Districts to administer basic education programs and implement education reform on behalf of more than one million public school students. For more information, visit the OSPI Web site at <http://www.k12.wa.us>.*